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Flashy rock group

Kiss only cheap thrills

By Bill Provick

For Kiss, America's new champions of glam rock, the medium — and the message — is in good shape, but the message — hot and heavy rock and roll — is not. Kiss — with its showable quality — needs a lot more.

The members of Kiss — the four-annual rock performers dressed in black leather with silver trim, eccentric make-up, and painted faces — have worked hard to get it to bring their band to international fame (or infamy, as the case may be) and to a tolerance threshold when it comes to the public's do-hokey.

Thursday night, Kiss brought their programmed pyrotechnics to the Civic Centre, and a very art-thrash rock crowd of 10,000 people was in some difficulty in living up to the intense spectator stage set up for them.

Kiss is determined and effort over style, and that their records have sold well, is not the point. The band is rebellious, visceral level, and it's not the point. They put up an impossible music without the impulsive excitement of a live performance.

With showmanship rated at a minimum, the band's mass forte, one expects, is to make the music as but a mere vehicle for the band's showmanship. But on Thursday night, when the rock gods were not in the house, Kiss were starting every third or fourth song with a choice between cheap thrills but to return his attention to the music base from which to spring. If there was any musical excitement on stage, it was the result of an almost embarrassing case of overkill.

Wednesday, Kiss lived somewhere between Bachman-Turner Overdrive (BTO) and the old Alice Cooper. The music catches of BTO's music and the class of Alice Cooper and his band were there. Kiss had some already strong points, but they were through their theatrics. Kiss is improving, especially with the addition of the adopted Cooper's record producer, and the majority of the band's visitation repertoire is far from memory.

If Kiss is to capture the public's heart, it is that Alice's isn't — it will be by default.

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